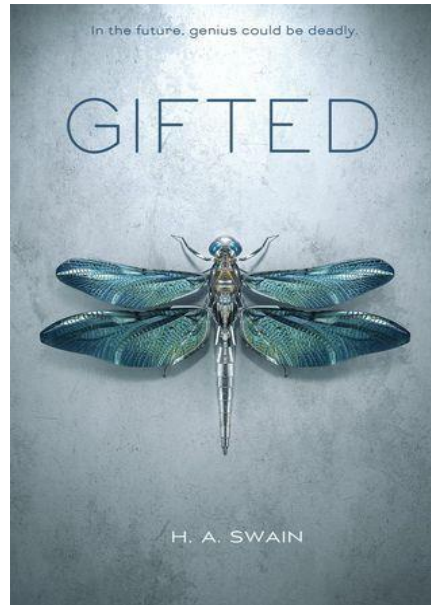


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By: H. A. SWAIN

GIFTED

Introduction

Gifted is a stand-alone book by Heather (H.A.) Swain that was published by Feiwel and Friends and released on June 14, 2016. Swain lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband, two children, and three pets. Swain has published several young adult novels including *Gifted*, *Hungry*, *Me, My Elf, and I*, *Selfish Elf Wish*, and *Josie Griffin is Not a Vampire*.

Swain has also written two children's craft books: *Make These Toys* and *Play These Games*, two adult novels, numerous short stories, personal essays, and non-fictional articles, and recently published her first two illustrated children's books titled *All Kinds of Kisses* that was

released in December 2016 and *How Many Hug* that will be released in December 2017 (www.heatherswainbooks.com).

About the Book

Gifted is a science fiction thriller, love story, and social experiment told by alternating viewpoints of the two main characters, Zimri Robinson, a Plebe and natural-born musician who is the top performer in a large packing warehouse and Orpheus Chanson, an elite Plute in the music industry and son of Harold Chanson, the copyright holder of the Acquired Savant Abilities (ASA) procedure. Zimri loves to sing but thanks to Chanson Industries, singing or playing copyrighted music is illegal unless royalties are paid. However, Zimri won't let that stop her from creating and singing her own songs.

Orpheus is tired of being pressured by his father and friends to have his ASA so he decides to leave the city, change his name, and go to work at the warehouse. Thanks to several events including Orpheus finding Zimri's missing grandmother, Zimri being responsible for Orpheus's training at the warehouse, and their personal desires to be something other than what society says they should be, Orpheus and Zimri form an unlikely bond while becoming each other's greatest ally as they try to change the music industry.

Discussion Guide

1. The beginning of the book is the first time that a dragonfly is observed, however there are several other instances throughout the book where Swain has the characters watching/observing a dragonfly. What is the purpose of the dragonfly and what do these dragonflies represent?
2. Why do you think Swain chose the dragonfly as the primary insect throughout the book?
3. Swain uses insect metaphors throughout the book. What are some examples of these metaphors and why are people and/or their actions often compared to insects?

4. Swain uses different types of insects for different types of machines: drones called 'razzies that look like dragonflies, flying cars called cicadas, and robots referred to as A.N.T.s that are replacing people in menial jobs. Why do you think the author chooses to use insects for these machines? What are some similarities and differences between the machines and real insects?
5. Plutes are used to having 'razzi drones watching their every move, Plebes are used to having real dragonflies flying around. When the "Buzz" finds out that Orpheus has been hiding, they send 'razzi drones to locate him and get a news story. If you were a Plebe seeing a 'razzi drone for the first time, how would you react? Would your impression about insects, especially dragonflies change?
6. If you were a Plute who saw a real dragonfly for the first time like Orpheus did by the river, would you react the same way he did? Why or why not? Would seeing a real dragonfly change your opinion of 'razzi drones?
7. Knowing the risks and results that come with having an Acquired Savant Abilities (ASA) procedure, would you want to have the procedure done? Why or why not?
8. Why do you think Chanson Industries thought it was necessary to have control over the music industry? Do you think Harold's efforts were effective? Why or why not?
9. Would you rather be a Plute that has to have an ASA in order to be successful but in return only care about your specialization and being in the "Buzz" or would you rather be a Plebe who is destined to work in the warehouse or find other menial labor to support yourself and family? Why?